

Bitter Creek Restoration Project

Canyon Country Fire Zone: Moab Field Office

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Location: BLM-managed public lands in Grand County, Utah, 14 miles NW of Mack, Colorado, Bitter Creek/San Arroyo Area North of I-70, South of Book Cliffs, near the Utah and Colorado Stateline.

Project Acres: Approximately 19,144 acres

Legal: T17S, R25E; Sections 2, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 35, 36, T17S, R26E; Sections 18, 19, 29, 30, 31, 32 and T. 18 S., R. 26 E., Sections 5 and 6

Lat/Long: 39° 19' 16" by 109° 06' 11"



Project Description: Within the project area, approximately 3,948 acres over a 2-5 year period have been identified to be broadcast burned and drill seeded. An additional 763 acres will be green stripped to protect existing sagebrush communities and treatment units. The primary objective of this treatment is to reduce the current wildland fire hazard created by the existing cheatgrass monoculture and restore this desert ecosystem to a mosaic vegetative community of native shrubs, forbs and grasses. This treatment will reduce potential negative effects from future wildland fire to both BLM and adjacent private lands while restoring the ecosystem and improving wildlife habitat.

Prior to the 1994 and 2005 wildfires that burned through this area, it was dominated by an ecologically important sage brush, desert shrub and grassland community. Both the 1994 and 2005 burned areas have been severely impacted by exotic weed invasions. These weed invasions have resulted in a dense cheatgrass mono-culture which now dominates the area. The loss of sagebrush and other native vegetation combined with the invasion of cheatgrass into the burned area of bitter Creek has altered this ecosystems integrity and sustainability. Without treatment the area is considered to be at risk of more frequent and intense wildland fires that will undoubtedly damage adjacent native communities and increase soil damage, erosion and loss of habitat throughout the area.

The overall treatment will use a combination of prescribed fire, seeding and chemical application in conjunction with fire breaks, green-stripping and grazing exclusion to protect both the project area and adjacent sagebrush communities from future wildfires.

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